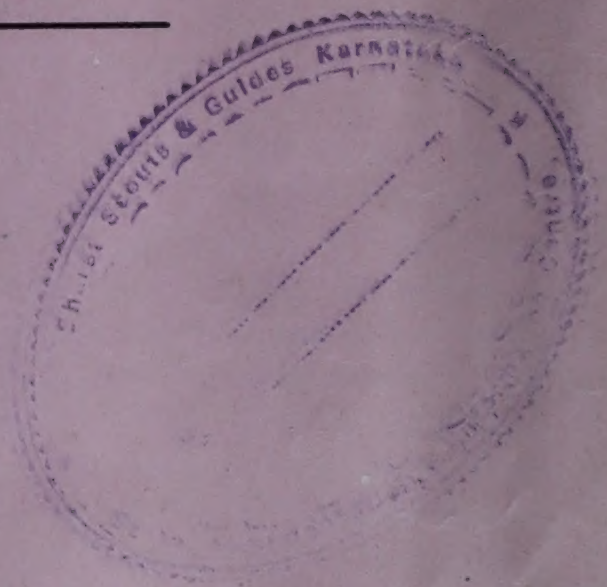

**The First Ten Years
After Merger : Some early
experiments with Badges
and Awards**

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Headquarters Commissioner, Research & Development



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The Bharat Scouts & Guides came into existence in 1951 as a result of the merger of the three former Scout and Guide associations, namely, the Boy Scouts Association in India, the Hindustan Scout Association, which also included Girl Guides, and the Girl Guides Association in India. The following account is based on my personal knowledge of facts concerning the designs of some of the badges and awards during the first ten years after this merger. I was myself responsible, at least partly, for a few of these designs. But I must hasten to add here that, apart from any little experience I had for this kind of work, I had no pretensions to any specialist knowledge of the subject of designs. I am only mentioning here some of the facts with which I was fairly familiar during those early years of our new association, but which may not be known to many of our members.

Membership Badge of the Association

Soon after the formation of the Bharat Scouts & Guides, the badge had only the Scout *Fleur-de-lis* with the Ashoka Chakra in the centre. Naturally, this created an agitation in the minds of the Guides throughout the country that they were being relegated to a subordinate status in the Movement. When the late Pandit Sree Ram Bajpai, the then National Organising Commissioner who had a say in most of these matters, visited our State and met the Guiders, one of our senior Divisional Commissioners (G) stressed the significance of the *Trefoil*, that it was a "very particular emblem in the opinion of the Guides" and pleaded for its inclusion in the badge. Pandit

Bajpai expressed that "it seemed to him a trifle that the Guides were distressed that the *Trefoil* . . . had been left out of the design of the new badge". In supporting the views expressed by the Guides, I also explained that the *Fleur-de-lis* and the *Trefoil* are entirely separate and distinct, from a botanical point of view, the former with its three petals of a flower, the flower of the lily, and the latter with the three lobes of a leaf of the shamrock or any one of the plants with trifoliate leaves, representing the three-fold Promise of the Scouts and Guides respectively. After much discussion of the subject, Pandit Bajpai finally assured the Guides that he would try to set right the design of the badge after the interim period of the new association was over.

At this time Dame Leslie Whateley, Director of the World Bureau of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts who was on a visit to this country to help solve some of the problems resulting from the merger of the associations, wrote to the National Headquarters in August 1952, stressing the importance of the *Trefoil* and emphasising its inclusion in the official badge of the association as a precondition for the Bharat Guides to be entitled to full membership of the world body. The *Trefoil* became incorporated in the official emblem, being superimposed on the *Fleur-de-lis* with the Ashoka Chakra in the centre, thus resulting in the present composite badge of the Bharat Scouts & Guides.

In this context, it is relevant to state here that the late Colonel J. S. Wilson, the Director of the

Boy Scouts International Bureau (now the World Scout Bureau) who was also on a fact-finding visit to this country reported to the National Headquarters in November 1952 that he offered "no official objection on the part of the Boy Scouts International Committee" for a joint badge for the association, with the Guide *Trefoil* superimposed on the Scout *Fleur-de-lis*. However, he made "a very strong plea for separate Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class badges for the Boy Scouts, showing in the Tenderfoot and First Class badges the *Fleur-de-lis* and the Chakra only, without the superimposed *Trefoil* . . . to mark the distinction in the training of Scouts and Guides", but he did not insist on this point in order not to delay the world recognition of the Bharat Guides.

Bharat Scout-Guide Badge

I have with me a scrap of paper showing the design and details of this badge (Fig. 1 A); this should be an item of some historical interest. This badge, now obsolete, was common to both Scouts

and Guides and has since been replaced by the President's Scout and President's Guide badges (Fig. 1 B, C). A small committee of three members was appointed by the National Headquarters to suggest a suitable design for the Bharat Scout-Guide badge and this was approved in July 1958. I was one of the members of this committee and also drew the design for the badge, the other members being the late Mrs. Mary Clubwallah Jadhav, Chief Commissioner (G) and Mr. D. P. Joshi, National Organising Commissioner. The colours of the badge were : outer red, enclosing a star-shaped blue background, with the emblem and the scroll beneath in gold (yellow), and the Ashoka Chakra and the word "BHARAT", in Devnagari script within the scroll, in blue. I have a sample of the finished badge which was sent to me by Mr. Joshi.

President's Scout and President's Guide Badges

These are two separate badges (Fig. 1 B, C) which replaced the earlier Bharat Scout-Guide badge when the President of India, our Chief Patron was

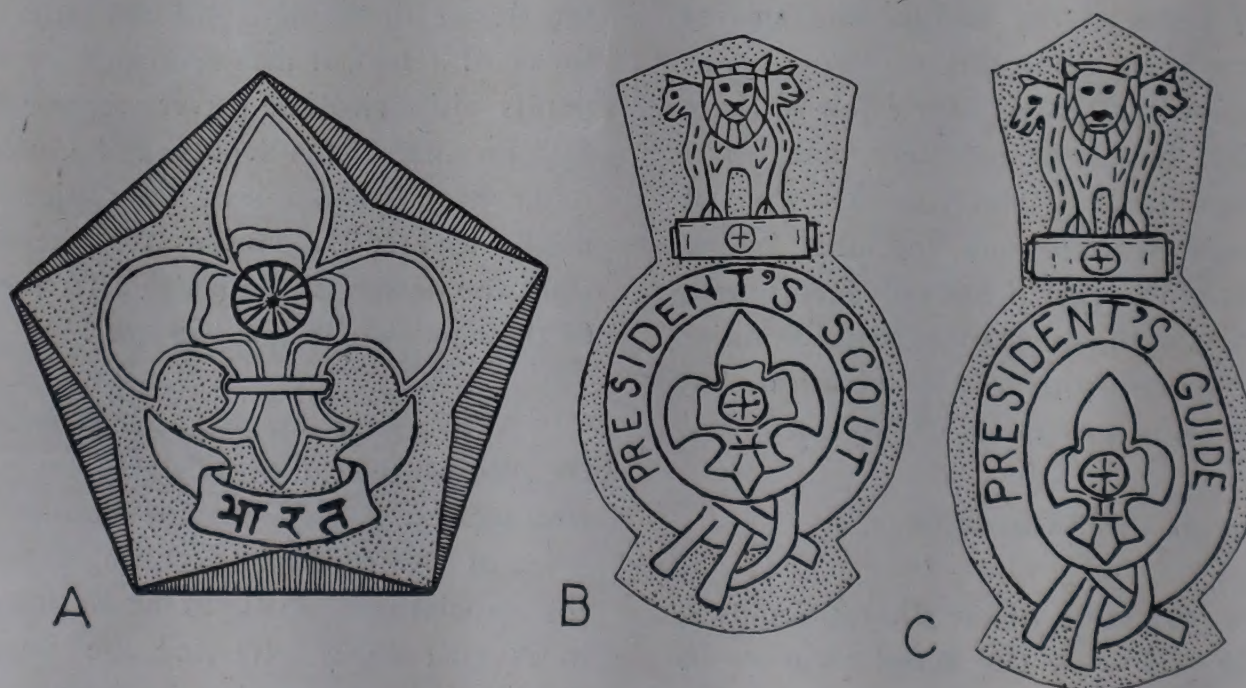


Fig. 1

pleased to authorise them as special proficiency badges to be worn by qualified Scouts and Guides respectively. Both the badges are somewhat crudely made and also no two badges seem to be identical, because they are handmade. Considering the prestigious status that these badges enjoy, they could have been more elegant, simple, yet dignified, and better finished. Further, there seems to be no reason why there should be two separate badges, one for Scouts and the other for Guides.

Passing on to the awards, two are mentioned in this account, both given to Scouters, Guiders and Commissioners, one in recognition of the special type of training which they undergo and the other for services rendered by them to the Movement.

Himalaya Wood Badge

In the first edition of the Aims, Policy, Rules and Organisation (APRO), 1951 of the Bharat Scouts

& Guides, it is stated that the insignia are "the scarf now worn with the Wood Badge, and the woggle of the present pattern, which may be in leather or in any one material, and two beads (different from the present pattern) worn round the neck on a blue cord" (Rule 334). This was at a time soon after the merger when the new association was thinking of replacing the international Wood Badge scheme by a scheme of training different from, but seemingly similar to the Gilwell scheme, and so qualifying it with the prefix "Himalaya". In my capacity at that time as Headquarters Commissioner for Training (S), I discussed the details regarding the insignia with Pandit Bajpai. He explained that, in order to distinguish the scheme of training from the original Gilwell scheme, it should be called the Himalaya Wood Badge scheme and the insignia, therefore, should also be different, the scarf with a special patch in place of the Maclaren tartan patch and the beads in sandal wood, oval-shaped and thus distinct from the Gilwell beads. Further, he also wanted me to give him a design for the patch with

the mountain peaks suggestive of the Himalayas and the oval beads. I sent him the designs and also samples of the sandal wood beads made locally (Fig. 2 A).

In the wake of the countrywide comments and conflicting views expressed by many members of the movement, came the timely warning from Colonel Wilson: "I say without hesitation that it would be a retrograde step in the eyes of the Scout world for the Bharat Scouts to seek to minimise the importance or the extent" of the Wood Badge type of training (November 1952). Even as late as in July 1955, the then National Camp Chief, the late Sardar Har Dial Singh wrote in his circular letter to all the State associations that the "Wood Badge Scarves, Beads and Woggles can be issued only after a decision" was reached about the design by the sub-committee appointed at the meeting of the National Council. A gloomy picture indeed, but happily it resolved itself satisfactorily, when better judgement prevailed; it was decided to retain the original Gilwell pattern

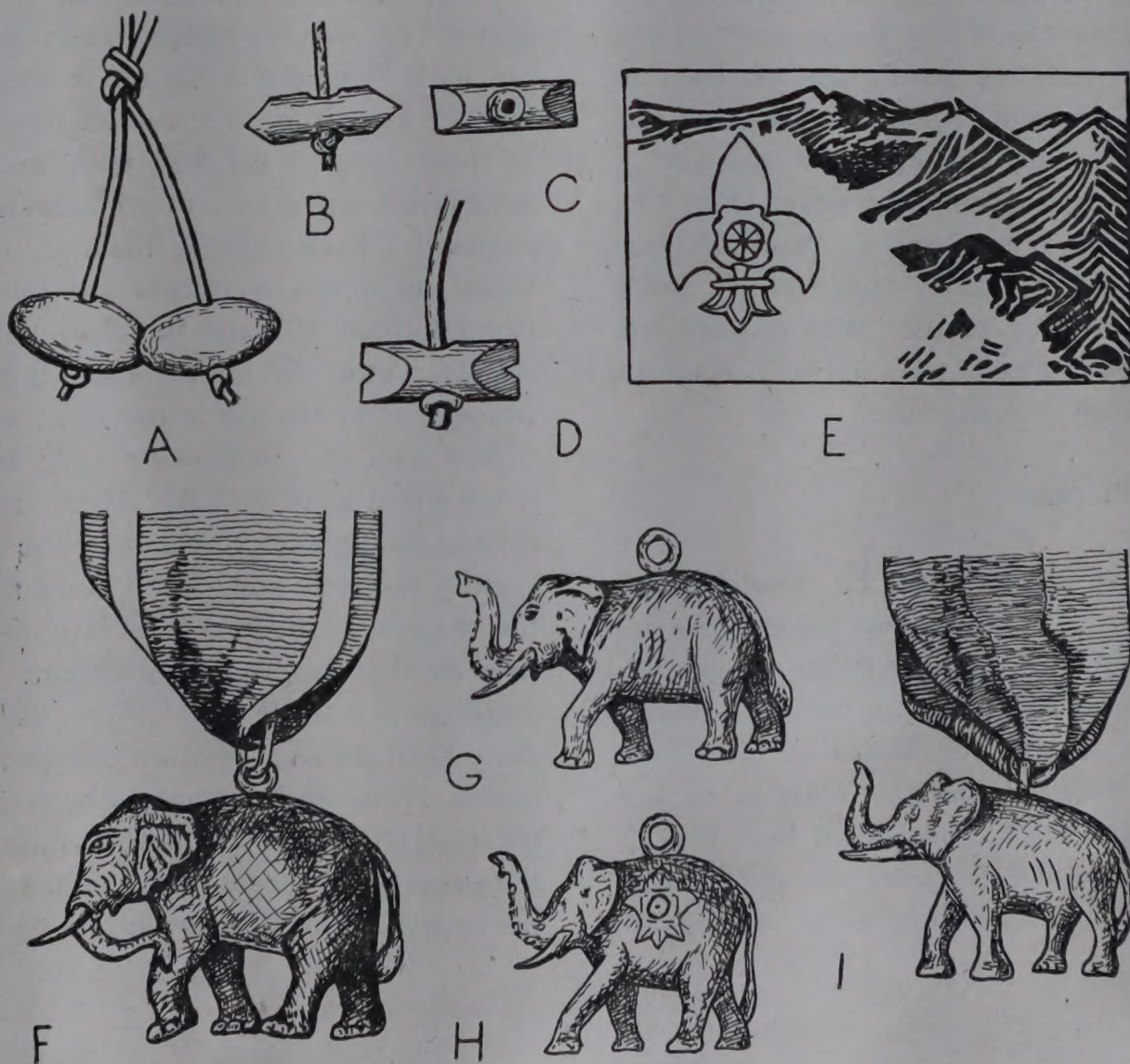


Fig. 2

of training for the Scout wing of the Movement, albeit with the qualifying prefix. So we came to preserve this important link with B.-P.

It seems some enthusiasts had the beads prepared in sandal wood, supposedly after the pattern of the Gilwell beads, but how inaccurate the imitation; the sloping cuts at either end are in the wrong plane (Fig. 2 B,C)! These were given to me recently by my colleague the State Organising Commissioner (S), Mr. S. Audikesavalu. Compare these with the Gilwell beads (Fig. 2 D),

When supplies of Gilwell beads were no longer available to us, replicas of these had to be got made in India. I have heard it from my esteemed friend Colonel V. K. Sundaram that, during his term as Camp Chief for India (S) in Pachmarhi, he experimented with several locally available types of wood and found the aerial roots of banyan most suitable for the purpose. So these are replicas of the replicas of the beads worn by the Zulu Chieftain Dinizalu!

I do not feel competent to comment on the insignia for the Himalaya Wood Badge worn by the Guiders, but a few relevant points may at least be mentioned in the present context. The scarf is apparently similar to the Gilwell scarf, but with a special patch showing the Himalayan peaks (Fig. 2 E; not my design which I had sent to Pandit Bajpai earlier) instead of the Maclaren tartan patch and a special pin instead of any beads: Why not call this the Himalaya Badge scheme of training, to distinguish it from the one which Scouters take?

Evolution of the Elephant

This is not an account of the evolutionary history of this pachyderm, the Indian (more correctly the Asiatic) species of the elephant known to zoologists as *Elephas maximus*; it is only an account of some facts concerning the award of the Silver Elephant. Four different designs (species in the jargon of the evolutionists) are shown here (Fig. 2 F-I), of which the one in G never saw the light of day. This design was prepared by me at the request

of Pandit Bajpai in 1955 and was sent to him, along with one of two identical samples in silver; I have the other one with me. Soon afterwards Pandit Bajpai passed away and so I could not know what happened to it.

After the merger of the former Scout and Guide associations, the late Mr. Satta Bose of West Bengal and I were, I think, among the earliest to be nominated for the award of the Silver Elephant. But at that time the new association, with its many administrative and organisational problems still unsolved, had not yet decided on the precise form and style of this award. However, it had in its possession a very small stock of the Silver Elephants of the former Boy Scouts Association in India and these were presented to both of us. We thus happen to be a real link between the old and the new associations. An earlier recipient of this award in our State from the old Boy Scouts Association was the late Mr. P. Siva Shanker, a former Chief Commissioner for India (S),

If I am correct, it was not until 1958, or probably even 1959 that the Bharat Scouts & Guides brought out its first version of the Silver Elephant (Fig. 2 H), with its trunk lifted up, and so not unlike my design of 1955 (Fig. 2 G), but with the emblem of the association engraved on both sides of the body of the elephant. I saw this for the first time in early 1959 when one of the recipients was our Assistant State Commissioner (S), the late Rao Bahadur M. Ramaswamy. This version of the Silver Elephant was superseded by the one in use now, a much improved model over its predecessor and, like it, with the trunk lifted up (Fig. 2 I). There are, however, some differences between the two. The present model is slightly larger in size, has a more shapely form and the emblem on the two sides is eliminated; the position of the legs is also different. It seems to be defective in a small way. When the award is worn, the ribbon shows a twist on one side, through half a circle. This can be remedied by simply opening out the two stitched ends of the ribbon, twisting it on the same side, again through half a circle, but in the opposite direction and rejoining the two ends.



